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Note on the theme from a discussion with

Marcel Smets, urban planner, president of the Institut for the City on the Move (IVM)

Mireille Apel-Muller General delegate of IVM

Can architects be precursors in the crisis?

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The urban crisis is not occasional but structural, due to a change of model of evolution. The urban planning of large projects managed by the cities will become the exception in favor of another logic of making the city more fragmented, with smaller public funds and on process without specific phasing because planning the future long term is becoming an uncertain exercise.

Architects must be part of this new context and be innovative and European could focus on a new type of smaller contexts but strategic for the evolution of urban life

1 micro sites with macro effects:

We can imagine that the city will focus on operations on smaller sites but whose role may be important because they bear greatest challenges.

It comes therefore to think to another level on urban scales. Example of a project in Saint Nazaire where the mayor's request was to change the structure of the historic city to direct its development toward the river, the urban planner Manuel de Sola Morales proposed to intervene without completely disrupting the historical figure of the city but to inflect it by acting punctually on articulation sites. This is the figure of the partial operation but which can greatly toggle the future of the city. More than working on the extent of the city, the goal is to punctually intervene at strategic points but whose implementation will have important effects.

2 - the passages as places of articulation

In China, Europe, Latin America, North America, ... the question of the passage as a shortcut, a transitional space, a preferred path becomes a crucial issue to facilitate access to various urban amenities, when city dwellers are requesting higher quality, attention to individual pathways, intensity, urbanity particularly by foot, requesting speed and access to the large metropolis as well as slow and quality in the proximity.

Micro interventions can have a significant impact and respond to emergency situations (safety, accessibility, efficiency) that the long time planning and the problems of scale can not answer. If the concept of town without rupture is a myth difficult to achieve, the themes of "urban staples", of "micro-passages", of shortcuts may be an answer to universal urban questions. They can be carriers of innovative thinking on modes of appropriation (private / public), the services, the conditions of participation of the population (residents as passers-by).

Work on passages can articulate: full / empty, speed / slow, mobile / immobile, aesthetic / functional, otherness / security, and rethink the hierarchy of networks, especially compared to today too dominant primary networks.

3 the sensorial city

An inquiry of IVM among young designers showed how spatial and social stakes were for them the urgency more than the long term, or rather, the issue became how to do today and not tomorrow, and how to not think of this as an intermediate waiting phase, but already as a urbanism in itself where the project designs already finite things even if this finish is not for along time.

And the urbanism of the present more than of the future , lifestyles have to be take into account in a finer and contextualized manner. This is the sensorial culture that becomes important, the relationship of the body to the ground, the body in space, sensoriality of the space. The goal is the sensorial and bodily well-being.

These three logics of micro urbanism, the importance of the places of passage and the relationship between the body and senses with the space can be interesting criteria for European. Some gateways may be created between European and IVM around sites that would enroll in this new context in relation to the IVM program called "Passages".

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